

Consequently, the present invention is not a mere combination of configurations of the references cited. That is to say, while the cited references disclose double-directional gaskets which utilize tips of the gaskets for the double-directional sealing purpose, the sealing element of the present invention is of the one-directional seal. Therefore, there should be no motivation for a person skilled in the art to arrive at the claimed sealing element by considering any of the references cited.

Moreover and in other words, Meyer discloses a gasket for water-tightly sealing hatches, etc., on ships, which is quite different from a hermetic sealing means for a hermetic container such as a container for shipment of semiconductor wafers as in the present invention. Meyer, in the drawings, illustrates sealing members (gasket) which is so configured that the gasket is formed in the same thickness (strip portion 19) from the proximal part to near the distal end (tip 18) which is configured in an arrowhead-shaped protrusion (15).

Furthermore, the arrowhead-shaped protrusion (15) is provided with generally flat surfaces 16 and 17. On the sealing operation, the flat surface (17) of the arrowhead portion (15) makes press-surface-contact on a leg portion of L-shaped portion (9), consequently, the strip portion (19) buckles like a toggle so as to urge the corner of the L-shaped portion (9) with the arrowhead portion (15), whereby the anticipated sealing is established.

Meanwhile, if direction of an external pressure might be charged, the strip portion (19) would deform in conformity with the direction of the external pressure so that the other flat surface 16 would make the press-surface-contact on the other leg portion of the L-shaped portion (9) so as to establish sealing. In this manner, in Meyer, two directional sealing can be established. On the other hand, in the present invention, if internal pressure of the hermetic container were to be increased, the internal atmosphere might be allowed to be released to outside to a certain extent; however, if external pressure were to be increased, exterior atmosphere could be prevented from entering into the container, which creating one-directional sealing. Accordingly, the purpose of the gasket in Meyer is quite different from the purpose of the present invention.

Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to specifically state that sealing is made by contact with the curved portion of the protruding part. For the above reasons, this type of sealing is in contrast to the type that is disclosed in the cited references.

Based on the present amendment and foregoing comments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of amended claim 1.

Claim 12 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 1 and further in view of Poltorak and Semon. Claim 3 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since these secondary references fail to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 3 and further in view of Ryan. Claim 7 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since the secondary reference fails to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 1 and further in view of Ryan. Claim 5 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since the secondary reference fails to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 12 and further in view of Ryan. Claim 6 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since the secondary reference fails to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 12 and further in view of Poltorak and Semon. Claim 4 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since the secondary references fail to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 4 and further in view of Ryan. Claim 8 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1 since the secondary reference fails to cure the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Krampotich et al. in view of Meyer.

Claim 9 has been amended to recite that the container body includes a number of positioning grooves located on an underside of the container body for mating with a support plate. In addition, claim 9 has been amended to recite that the protruding part is formed in a tapered configuration which becomes gradually narrower from the proximal part toward the distal end. Applicants respectfully submit that neither of these added features is present or suggested in either of the cited references and therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

As described above and set forth in amended claim 9, the protruding part of the present invention is so formed as a tapered configuration which becomes gradually narrower from the proximal part toward the distal end, protrudes obliquely outwards and toward the open front of the container body. In the sealing process, the middle portion of the protruding part makes contact with the open front of the container body so as to make the protruding part elastically deformed outward the open front. Accordingly, as the internal pressure of the container body is increased, internal atmosphere is allowed to leak out, while the external pressure of the container body is increased, external atmosphere is prevented from entering into the container body, whereby creating the one-directional sealing.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated:

~~Respectfully submitted,~~

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Attachments